

— Filling the blank spot: first report on the freshwater crayfish distribution in Albania —



The knowledge on the distribution of native and non-native crayfish species in Europe has substantially advanced during last two decades. However, data on the exact distribution of European crayfish are still lacking in some regions of the Balkan Peninsula, e.g., in Albania. Out of five European crayfish taxa, *Astacus astacus* and *Austropotamobius torrentium* are considered to occur in Albanian freshwaters. However, until now the only confirmed localities of the occurrence of any crayfish species in Albania are a single place in the Mat River drainage and Prespa Lake. Five crayfish individuals have been collected recently from two localities in Albania: Ohrid Lake and upper Devolli River (Seman basin), as a result of a repeated sampling in all main Albanian river drainages. All specimens were morphologically and molecularly identified as the noble crayfish, *A. astacus*, providing confirmation of its presence in this Balkan country. The present paper summarizes historic and current distribution records of the crayfishes in Albania and neighbouring countries as well as provides insight into genetic variability of Albanian *A. astacus*.

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Obtenir le document : EDP Sciences

Mots clés : Ohrid Lake, DNA barcoding, Balkan Peninsula, Lac Ohrid, code barres ADN, Péninsule des Balkans

Thème (issu du Text Mining) : FAUNE

Date : 2017-08-18

Format : text/xml

Source : <https://doi.org/10.1051/kmae/2017024>

Langue : Anglais

Télécharger les documents : <https://www.kmae-journal.org/10.1051/kmae/2017024/pdf>

Permalien : <https://www.documentation.eauetbiodiversite.fr/notice/filling-the-blank-spot-first-report-on-the-freshwater-crayfish-distribution-in-albania0>

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